

February 19, 2017

Dear Senator Formica, Senator Osten, and Representative Walker,

I am writing to ask for your support in maintaining borrowIt CT, also known as Connecticard. This visionary program, established in 1973, allows Connecticut residents immediate access to materials in all 190 Connecticut public libraries at no charge, simply via use of their local library card. This truly is a program of substantial impact, as evidenced by the 3.9 million items that were borrowed through borrowIt CT during fiscal year 2016. Coupled with the fact that over 1.5 million state residents have library cards (more than 40% of the state population), borrowIt CT provides a broad benefit across the state.

I have had a deep appreciation for libraries since I was a child, realizing early how remarkable American public libraries are, in freely providing literature, inspiration, education, and entertainment to our citizens. When I relocated to Groton years ago, I discovered the Groton Public Library within a few days. Delighted to find such a superb local library, I was further impressed by the fact that that my library card was honored at public libraries throughout the state. When I was asked to apply for a position on the Board of the Groton Public Library, I instantly accepted, in an effort to give back to an institution that has provided such fulfillment to me and so many others.

Approximately one-third of the people who use the Groton Public Library's resources and materials are from out of town, which speaks to Connecticut residents' interest in accessing a broader range of materials than are available at some of the smaller public libraries. The reimbursements provided by borrowIt CT, while not covering the entire costs of loaning materials to non-residents, certainly assist in supporting this valuable service, and constitute an important piece of the ongoing budget for the Groton Public Library. Should borrowIt CT be curtailed or eliminated, it will become necessary, at a minimum, to institute fees for these people to borrow items. This will undoubtedly be the case at many of the Connecticut public libraries that are substantial lenders of library materials, and will come as a most unpleasant surprise to the large number of Connecticut taxpayers who take advantage of multiple public library collections.

While we all realize that Connecticut faces significant budgetary problems, borrowIt CT provides an important service to a large proportion of our state residents, from varied communities. The overhead costs of this program are tiny, as only a small portion of one position is needed for its administration; essentially all of the funding goes directly to the libraries that loan books and other materials to out-of-town residents, thereby leveraging the collections of all 190 participating libraries. I urge you to support borrowIt CT at its full funding level of \$806,000.

Sincerely yours,
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